

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

February 12, 2002 LB 185

Wisconsin and only applies to over-the-road movements, not activities within the yard as defined by the Code of Federal Regulations. You were informed that LB 185 would interfere with modern technology and that railroad's inability to move commerce in an efficient manner in Nebraska and that Burlington Northern Santa Fe views the pilot test bases portable locomotive control technology, that's quite a name, and that it's initiated this...it's being initiated this week as a step towards improving the safety of yard operations. The safe operation of every train crew requires complete vigilance by the crew, the absolute compliance with the code of operating rules. Crew members rely heavily on each other during the operation, and two sets of ears and two sets of eyes are imperative to maintain the safety operation despite advances that are being made in technology. Malfunctions in railroad operations do occur. I was just speaking with Senator Cudaback, and he was in Lexington last night and they had a 28 train derailment and crash. I believe that I speak on behalf of all railroad employees when I say, great, let's test the technology. When and if it's determined safer, or as safe, as two-person crews, the federal government can make that claim and LB 185 will not be needed. Until that time, LB 185 is necessary. You were also informed that LB 185 would provide a less competitive rail product in Nebraska. I honestly do not understand how anyone could make that claim. Safety has never inhibited commerce. Safety is, and will remain, one of my only priorities in introducing this legislation. I would like to think that anyone operating a business in this state has the same concern. If not, I think our state may be better off without them. One of the handouts that you have received, or are receiving, is a manifest detailing the cargo that was transported on just two trains across the state of Nebraska. My understanding is that the railroad is required to give employees this information detailing what is contained in their loads. As you can see from the handout, some of the cargo of those two trains include ethyl acetate, compressed gas, mercury, methyl methacrylate monomer, flammable liquids, alcohol, xylene, formaldehyde, methanol, toluene, and acetic acid. Almost all of these are volatile flammable liquids, some with a flash point and toxic by ingestion. Do you really want this cargo traveling across our state with less than a two-person crew? How in the world is